

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

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HOWARD LEE ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

RALEIGH—Former State Senator Howard Lee was elected Chairman of the State Board of Education today. Lee was appointed by Gov. Mike Easley to fill the term of Phillip J. Kirk. Kirk resigned from his position effective today.

“I am pleased that the State Board of Education has accepted my recommendation and elected Howard Lee to serve as Chairman,” said Easley. “Howard Lee recognizes the need for continuing our strong standards and accountability measures. He will be a strong leader for children and public schools and I look forward to working with him and with the entire State Board of Education.”

Easley appointed Lee to the State Board of Education on Tuesday sighting his tremendous experience and leadership in education in the General Assembly. During his tenure in the state Senate, Lee led efforts to enact legislation on school safety, school accountability and improving teacher quality. He played a leading role in the passage of the 1995 legislation that led to the creation of the ABCs program and the Excellent Schools Act of 1997, which dramatically improved teacher pay and raised standards for teachers.

Lee is a board member of the Southern Regional Education Board, the Education Commission of the States, the North Carolina Science, Mathematics and Technology Education Center, the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics Foundation, and the Public School Forum of North Carolina.

Lee served in the U.S. Army from 1959-1961. He is a graduate of Fort Valley State College in Georgia and earned his Master's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He was a member of the research faculty staff and a senior administrator at Duke University from 1966-1976. During that time, his focus was on obstacles to teaching disadvantaged children and on early childhood learning techniques. Lee also served as a visiting professor at North Carolina Central University from 1966-1969, and taught at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from 1982-1984.

Lee served as Mayor of Chapel Hill from 1969-1975. From 1977-1981, he served as the Secretary for the Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources. Lee was elected to the North Carolina Senate in 1990, where he served for 10 years (1990-1994; 1996-2002). As a state senator, Lee served as Co-Chairman of Appropriations and Co-Chair (Vice-Chair) of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Education and Higher Education. In addition, he served on the Joint Legislative Commission on Government Operations Education/Human Resources Subcommittee and Co-Chaired the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee.

The North Carolina State Board of Education supervises and administers the public school system and the education funds provided for its support. There are 13 members on the board who serve eight-year terms. The Lieutenant Governor and the State Treasurer serve on the board, and the Governor appoints 11 members.

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